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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

AHMED, SAMIR ANWAR

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2623

DATE MAILED: 02/14/2002

11

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/367 630

Applicant(s)

Sg. to P. of.

Examiner

S. Ahmed

Group Art Unit

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—The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet beneath the correspondence address—

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, such period shall, by default, expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Status

- ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11/21/01
- ☐ This action is FINAL.
- ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- ☒ Claim(s) 11-17, 19-24, 30-42 is/are pending in the application.
- ☐ Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- ☒ Claim(s) 11-17, 19-24, 30-34 is/are rejected.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

Application Papers

- ☐ See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.
- ☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.
- ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 (a)-(d)

- ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).
- ☐ All ☐ Some* ☐ None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been received.
- ☐ received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) _____.
- ☐ received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*Certified copies not received: _____

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). _____
- ☒ Notice of Reference(s) Cited, PTO-892
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948
- ☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152
- ☐ Other _____

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1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 11/21/01 has been entered.
2. The amendment filed 11/21/01 have been entered and made of record.
3. In response to Applicant's amendment filed 11/21/01 the objection to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a) is withdrawn
4. In response to Applicant's amendment filed 11/21/01 the objection to claims 28-29 under 37 CFR 1.75 is withdrawn.
5. In response to Applicant's amendment filed 11/21/01 the rejection to claims 12-18 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph is withdrawn.
6. In response to Applicant's amendment filed 11/21/01 the rejection to claims 13, 19-26 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph is withdrawn.
7. Applicant has amended independent claims 11, 19 and independent claims 12-17, 20-24, to add new independent claim 40, and new dependent claims 30-39, 41-42, that include among other features “ (b) a pressure-based fingerprint sensor for detecting a fingerprint pattern comprising at least a portion of a plurality of ridges and a plurality of valleys of a finger in both an x direction and a y-direction when said finger is pressed against said sensor, (d) a processor configured to determine by electronic processing”. Applicant did not previously claim these

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features in the combination as now claimed. By adding these limitations, Applicant has traversed the rejection in the first Office Action. Applicant's arguments filed 11/21/01, with regard to claims 11-17, 19-24 have been fully considered but they are moot in view of the new grounds of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

8. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

9. Claims 15, 17, 20-21, 32-33, 36-37 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Claim 15, recites "said portable key unit comprising said processor but not any of said components (b), (c), or (e)", line 2-3. There is no disclosure in the specification as originally filed of a portable key unit comprising said processor but not any of said components (b), (c), or (e), or how to perform it. There is no embodiment shows that the card k (portable key) has a processor without any of the components (b), (c), or (e). Original claims 4 and 9 do not support this feature. The cited pages 4-5 only recite "the matching unit can be embedded can be

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embedded in a single PC board, integrated circuit..." (Page 4, lines 19-21) which does not teach that a processor without any of the sensor, the memory, or the control unit components exists on card k. As a matter of fact "the matching unit" comprises a processor (DSP) and a memory as shown in the figs.

Claim 17, recites "said portable key unit comprising said sensor and said processor but not any of said components (c), or (e)", line 2-3. There is no disclosure in the specification as originally filed of a portable key unit comprising said sensor and said processor but not any of said components (c), or (e), or how to perform it. There is no embodiment shows that the card k (portable key) has a sensor and a processor but not of a semiconductor memory or a control unit. The cited page 51, discloses several embodiments related to Fig. 30, none of them shows that the card k (portable key) has a sensor and a processor but not any of semiconductor memory or a control unit. In the embodiment disclosed on lines 7-14 of page 51, the EEPROM 14 of the card k is not present. However this leaves the card k (as shown in Fig 30) with the sensor A, the DSP12, the flash memory 11, the RAM 13. In the embodiment disclosed on line 21 of page 51-line 2, page 52, the EEPROM 14 and HDD 15 of the receiving end (not the card k) is not present and the sensor A can be on the card or off the card. However this still leaves the card k (as shown in Fig 30) with the matching circuit B (DSP12, and the memories 11, 13 and 14).

Claim 20, recites "said portable key unit comprising said semiconductor memory but not said sensor or said processor", line 2-3. There is no disclosure in the specification as originally filed of a portable key unit comprising said semiconductor memory but not said sensor or said

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processor, or how to perform it. There is no embodiment shows that the card k (portable key) has a semiconductor memory but not a sensor or a processor. Original claims 4 and 9 do not support this feature. The cited pages 51-52, discloses several embodiments related to Fig. 30, non of them shows that the card k (portable key) has a semiconductor memory but not a sensor or a processor. In the embodiment disclosed on lines 7-14 of page 51, the EEPROM 14 of the card k is not present. However this leaves the card k (as shown in Fig 30) with the sensor A, the DSP12, the flash memory 11, the RAM 13. In the embodiment disclosed on line 21 of page 51-line 2, page 52, the EEPROM 14 and HDD 15 of the receiving end (not the card k) is not present and the sensor A can be on the card or off the card. However this still leaves the card k (as shown in Fig 30) with the matching circuit B (DSP12, and the memories 11, 13 and 14).

As to claim 21 refer to claim 17 rejection.

Claim 32, recites "said plurality of processors and said plurality of semiconductor memory devices being configured to perform said fingerprint match determinations in parallel", line 2-4. There is no disclosure in the specification as originally filed of said plurality of processors and said plurality of semiconductor memory devices being configured to perform said fingerprint match determinations in parallel, or how to perform it. The cited pages 18-19 only recite "however, more than one matching unit B may be provided..." (Page 18, line 25-page 19, line 5) which does not teach that the plurality of processors and the plurality of semiconductor memory devices of these matching units being configured to perform the fingerprint match determinations in parallel.

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Claim 33, recites "wherein said processor is further configured to make a negative fingerprint match determination if said sensed fingerprint data perfectly matches any of said registered fingerprint data.", line 2-3. There is no disclosure in the specification as originally filed of said processor is further configured to make a negative fingerprint match determination if said sensed fingerprint data perfectly matches any of said registered fingerprint data., or how to perform it. The cited pages 20-21, discloses that the matching circuit B (processor and memory) can be configured to reject an offered fingerprint code that matches perfectly with a registered fingerprint code (page 20, lines 20-23). So, if the offered fingerprint code matches perfectly with a registered one it is likely that the offered code was created in an unauthorized manner using the registered code. This feature prevent unlocking the object by unauthorized copying of a fingerprint code (page 20, line 27- page 21, line 2). The finger print code is a code prepared from the sensed fingerprint pattern (page 22, last two lines). The matching circuit is configured to reject an offered copied fingerprint code of a registered fingerprint code and not sensed fingerprint data.

As to claim 36 refer to claim 32 rejection.

As to claim 37 refer to claim 33 rejection.

Drawings

10. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the "limitations in claims 15, 17, 20-

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21, 32-33, 36-37" (refer to paragraph 8) must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

11. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

12. Claims 11-12, 14, 19, 30, 31, 24, 40, 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bowker et al (U.S. Patent 5,963,657) in view of Tamori (U.S. Patent 5,503,029).

As to claim 11, Bowker disclose a locking device (see Fig. 7) comprising:

(a) a locking mechanism for locking and unlocking movement of an object to be unlocked [solenoid drive 999 for locking and unlocking movement of door 960 (col. 23, lines 8-9, and 20-22, Fig. 7, items 999, 960)] ;

(b) a fingerprint sensor for detecting a fingerprint pattern (col. 23, lines 37-42);

© a semiconductor memory device for storing registered fingerprint data [EPROM 507 stores authorized-user fingerprint templates (col. 22, lines 50-52, Fig. 6, item 507), the

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EPROM as shown in Figs 22 and 23-2 is a an IC (integrated circuit) chip which is conventionally made of silicon (semiconductor)];

(d) a processor configured to determine by electronic processing whether the fingerprint data created from the Fingerprint pattern detected by said fingerprint sensor matches with any of the registered fingerprint data stored in said semiconductor memory device (col. 22, lines 50-55); and

(e) a control unit for controlling whether said locking mechanism locks or unlocks movement of said object in response to said fingerprint match determination by said processor (col. 22, lines 58-61, col. 23, lines 37-46).

Bowker does not disclose that the fingerprint sensor is a pressure-based fingerprint sensor comprising at least a portion of a plurality of ridges and a plurality of valleys of a finger in both an x direction and a y-direction when said finger is pressed against said sensor. Tamori discloses an inexpensive surface pressure panel capable of detecting the variations in the pressure due to surface variations (ridges and grooves) of a fingerprint. The pressure sensor is an active matrix type array of having first and second (X and Y) groups of electrodes (col. 2, lines 11-25, col. 4, line 37-col. 5, line 15, Fig. 4). One skilled in the art would have clearly recognized that the optical fingerprint sensor of Bowker's device would have been bulky, expensive and sensitive to the effects of greasiness of the fingertip, moisture (sweat or the like) that would have compromised the accuracy of the detected fingerprint. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have used a pressure-

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based fingerprint sensor that detects a plurality of ridges and a plurality of valleys of a finger in both an x direction and a y-direction when a finger is pressed against the sensor in Bowker's device as taught by Tamori in order to achieve a compact, inexpensive surface pressure fingerprint sensor that is capable of accurately detecting the user's fingerprint (col. 2, lines 32-37) and is not susceptible to the effects of greasiness of the fingertip, moisture (sweat or the like) compared to other conventional fingerprint sensors.

As to claim 12, Bowker further discloses further comprising portable key unit separated from said locking mechanism for communicating to said control unit how to control said locking mechanism according to said fingerprint match determination by said processor, said portable key unit comprising said sensor, said processor, and said semiconductor memory device but not said control unit [Bowker discloses that his analyzer 96 is used for other apparatus, facilities, financial services and information services (col. 24, lines 50-66) including an identification card (portable key) carried by the user (col. 22, line 66-col. 23, line 1-2), as shown in Fig. 12, the analyzer 96 includes sensor, memory, CPU, power source and is communicating with the control unit 97 to control the locking mechanism 99].

As to claim 14, Bowker further discloses wherein said portable key unit is a card (col. 22, line 66-col. 23, line 1-2)

As to claim 19, refer to claim 11 rejection for their common features. Bowker further discloses a switching device comprising:

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(a) a switch for starting operation of an object [internal relay 519 provides a switch closure to an external relay that provides access to utilization means (door) (Col. 22, lines 58-61, col. 24, lines 39-49, Fig. 12, item 97)];

(e) a processor to (2) actuate said starting switch in response to said fingerprint match determination being positive (col. 24, lines 39-49, Fig. 12, item 94).

As to claim 30, Bowker further discloses, further comprising a portable key unit separated from said starting switch, said portable key comprising said sensor or said semiconductor memory device [Bowker discloses that his analyzer 96 is used for other apparatus, facilities , financial services and information services (col. 24, lines 50-66) including an identification card (portable key) carried by the user (col. 22, line 66-col. 23, line 1-2), as shown in Fig. 12, the analyzer 96 includes sensor, memory].

As to claim 31, refer to claim 12 rejection.

As to claim 24, refer to claim 14 rejection.

As to claim 40, refer to claim 11 rejection for their common features. Bowker further discloses, a processor to (1) create sensed fingerprint data from said fingerprint pattern detected by said sensor (Fig. 12, items 92, 11), and (3) actuate said control circuit in response to said fingerprint match determination being positive (col. 24, lines 39-49, Fig. 12, items 94, 97), said processor being, in communication with said semiconductor memory device, said sensor, and said control circuit (Fig. 12, items 94, 93, 92, and 97).

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As to claim 42, refer to claim 12 rejection for their common features. Bowker further discloses, w herein said processor is further configured to compare the fingerprint data created from the fingerprint pattern detected by said fingerprint sensor with the registered fingerprint data stored in said semiconductor memory device when unlocking is needed ((col. 22, lines 50-55, col. 22, lines 58-61, col. 23, lines 37-46 and Fig. 12).

13. Claims 13, 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bowker et al (U.S. Patent 5,963,657) in view of Tamori (U.S. Patent 5,503,029) as applied to claims 12 and 31 above and further in view of Gullman et al. (U.S. Patent 5,280,527).

As to claim 13, Neither Bowker nor Tamori discloses, wherein said portable key unit is configured to communicate with said control unit via at least one electrical connector .

Gullman discloses a security apparatus (IC card) 14 including a processing unit, memory and a fingerprint sensor, upon entry of the cardholder's fingerprint information, the processor executes the verification algorithm (col.2, lines 48-55, Fig. 1, item 14, Fig. 2, processor 33). Security safeguards for accessing a host system 10 [which may be any electronic system, such as electronic gate for accessing a secured area (col. 2, line 66- col. 3, line 2)] are provided by an access device 12 and the ID card 14. Access device 12 communicates with the host system (electronic gate for accessing a secured area) to verify authorized personnel and transfer information. Access device 12 may be an electronic lock restricting access to a secured area. The IC card 14 adds another level of security to the access process. The token output from the IC card is transmitted directly to the host system (electronic gate) through a direct data communication

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line (col. 2, lines 62-65). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use Gullman's teachings to modify the combined device of Bowker and Tamori by using an IC card (portable key unit) that is connected electrically through a connector (direct data communication line) to the switching device in order to add another level of security to the access process and eliminate the need for the user to memorize a code or carry a printed memorandum of the code.

As to claim 23, refer to claim 13 rejection.

14. Claims 16, 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bowker et al (U.S. Patent 5,963,657) in view of Tamori (U.S. Patent 5,503,029) as applied to claims 11 and 19 above and further in view of Masafumi Kinoshita et al. (Japanese Kokai Patent Application No. Hie 5-233896).

As to claim 16, Neither Bowker nor Tamori discloses, wherein said processor is a first processor, wherein said locking device further comprises a second processor in communication with said first processor and said semiconductor memory device, said second processor being configured to register an authorized person by storing in said semiconductor memory device fingerprint data created from said fingerprint pattern of said authorized person and detected by said sensor, and wherein said locking device further comprises a portable key unit separated from said locking mechanism, said portable key unit comprising either (i) said first processor and said sensor but not said second processor, or (ii) said second processor and said sensor but not said first processor.

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Kinoshita discloses an entry and exit control device that manages the closing and opening of a door by comparing the characteristic information (fingerprint) of a user against a recorded fingerprint characteristic information. The system comprises a portable ID card 8, which includes a fingerprint sensor 1, a fingerprint storage device (memory) 2, a card control section 3 (first processor) that stores fingerprints detected by the sensor in, and retrieves fingerprints from storage device, a card communication section 5, power supply 6. An entry and exit management unit 15, that manages a door opening and closing section 13 (a door lock), unit 15 includes a communication section 5 in communication with card communication section 5, a finger print management section 10 (storage device) that records the fingerprints, management control, section 11 (second processor) that compares the characteristic information (fingerprint) of a user against a recorded fingerprint characteristic information of users for entry and exit and sends a door opening and closing command to the door opening and closing section 13 (a door lock) (see Fig 1). As shown in the fig., there is two processors communicating with each other one is on the card and the other is on the locking device. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use Kinoshita's teachings to modify the combined device of Bowker and Tamori by using a first a second processor communicating with each other one is on the card and the other is on the locking device in order to improve security for controlled entry and exit from certain facilities by recognizing persons entering or leaving on the basis of reading fingerprints, and realizes a high degree of security by controlling and closing of the doors of the facilities.

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As to claim 22 refer to claim 16 rejection.

15. Claims 34, 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bowker et al (U.S. Patent 5,963,657) in view of Tamori (U.S. Patent 5,503,029) as applied to claims 11 and 19 above and further in view of Moses et al. (U.S. Patent 5,503,029).

As to claim 34, Neither Bowker nor Tamori discloses, wherein said processor is further configured to store said sensed fingerprint pattern in said semiconductor memory device in response to said fingerprint match determination being negative.

Moses discloses a security system that controls access from one area to another by reading data on an identification card entered into a reader and measuring the physical characteristics (biometric) of each person passing through, comparing the measured physical characteristics (biometric) with prerecorded physical characteristics (biometric data) of the person to whom the card is issued (col. 1, lines 56-66). The biometric characteristics measured are height, weight and compared to record profile of the authorized owner of the card. If the comparison certainty is below a certain level (negative match) the computer (processor) stores all data transaction (i.e. the biometric data and other data related to the card) (col. 10, lines 34-49). Fingerprint data, face data, height, and weight are physical characteristics (biometric data) that are known in the art to be used for identification. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use Kinoshita's teachings to modify the combined device of Bowker and Tamori by storing the biometric data (fingerprints in this

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case) in the semiconductor memory when the matching of the biometric data (fingerprint) is negative in order to establish a historical file that shows breaches or violations of the security.

As to claim 38, refer to claim 34 rejection.

16. Claims 35, 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bowker et al (U.S. Patent 5,963,657) in view of Tamori (U.S. Patent 5,503,029) as applied to claims 11 and 19 above and further in view of Gokcebay (U.S. Patent 5,337,043).

As to claim 35, Neither Bowker nor Tamori discloses, further comprising a clock unit for generating a periodic clock signal and a time determining unit configured to maintain a time value according to said clock signal and identify a time value when the finger is pressed against said sensor, wherein said semiconductor memory device is further configured to store access control data, said access control data identifying when an authorized person for whom registered fingerprint data is stored is allowed to lock or unlock movement of said object, and wherein said processor is further configured such that said locking or unlocking of said object is further dependent upon said processor positively determining from a comparison between said access control data and said identified time value that said authorized person is allowed to lock or unlock movement of said object.

Gokcebay discloses a high security access control system involving credit card type keys or mechanical keys and locks as well as keyholder authentication to prevent unauthorized use of the key. A card type key (electronic, magnetic, etc.) carries encoded data which represent a personal feature of the intended keyholder assigned to that key, such as a fingerprint (a memory

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device that stores registered fingerprint code data). The data may be read by swiping it through a reader slot. The information as read is briefly stored in a memory associated with a small processor connected to the key reader. The fingerprint reader scans the fingerprint, and this scanned information is compared with the encoded information. If the actual fingerprint as read matches the fingerprint as encoded and stored on the key, the keyholder is granted access (col. 2, lines 5-64). The card type key is used for access control of a door with a lock (see Figs 1, and 3). The access is granted based on both positive matching of the fingerprint and matching of the time and date which the user may validly access the area (see Fig.8). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use Gokcebay's teachings to modify combined device of Bowker and Tamori, by granting access only when both the matching of the fingerprint and matching of the time and date which the user may validly access the area are positive in order to, to provide high security access control based on a personal feature (such as a fingerprint) of the intended keyholder assigned to that key and time and date which the user may validly has access, so that access rights can be adjusted or can be canceled for certain personnel (such as discharged employees) (col. 3, lines 16-42).

As to claim 39, refer to claim 35 rejection.

17. ^{41 15} Claims ~~35, 39~~ are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bowker et al (U.S. Patent 5,963,657) in view of Tamori (U.S. Patent 5,503,029) as applied to claims 11 and 19 above and further in view of Cockburn (U.S. Patent 5,055,658).

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As to claim 41, [as best understood by the Examiner], Bowker discloses, wherein said system further comprises a starting switch in circuit with a second object, said starting switch being operable to actuate said second object and wherein said processor is in communication with said starting switch and is further configured to operate said starting switch in response to said fingerprint match determination being positive (Fig. 12, item 97, col. 24, lines 24-42)

Bowker does not disclose wherein said object is a first object and does not specifically disclose that the switch connect or disconnect power to said second object.

Cockburn discloses a motor car security system, the system uses a centralized locking system as shown in Fig. 1 that controls a steering lock (first object) and motor car ignition control (second object) (ignition switch of a motor car). Cockburn does not specifically disclose that the ignition control (ignition switch). However, it is well-known in the art that ignition switches are used to connect or disconnect power to the motor. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use Cockburn's teachings to modify combined device of Bowker and Tamori, by controlling multiple objects in order to achieve a reliable technique for accessing and using cars that positively identifying the person seeking access, should provide access to all the car features (door locks, ignition switch, steering lock, i.e multiple objects), and should eliminate the need to carry multiple keys and fobs, or to memorize combinations or passwords.

Contact Information

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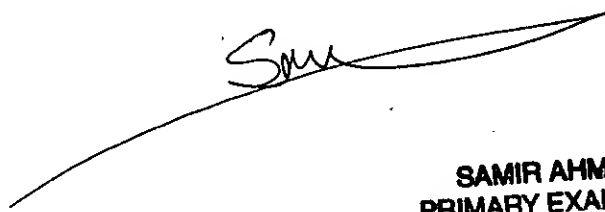
18. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Examiner Samir Ahmed whose telephone number is (703) 305-9870. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Au, Amelia can be reached on (703)872-9314. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 872-9314.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3900.

SA

2/5/02

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Samir', is written over a long, thin, slightly curved horizontal line.

**SAMIR AHMED
PRIMARY EXAMINER**